



To: Climate Power

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: June 2026

Re: NEW POLL RESULTS: Voters hesitant on data centers in their community generally – but receptive to local data centers powered by clean energy

Public opinion and the political landscape around data centers is evolving rapidly. In this quickly changing environment, voters' views of data centers are deeply fluid, though serious NIMBY concerns have emerged. However, decisionmakers have a unique opportunity to push for a version of data center development that is powered by wind and solar instead of fossil fuels. Voters are deeply receptive to that pivot as they seek solutions that ensure data centers benefit local communities rather than harm them. This survey used data from Heatmap to examine segments of voters who live near current or upcoming data center sites, as well as contested data center sites, differentiating between urban/suburban and rural voters to give a more nuanced picture of opinions on the issue.

Executive Summary

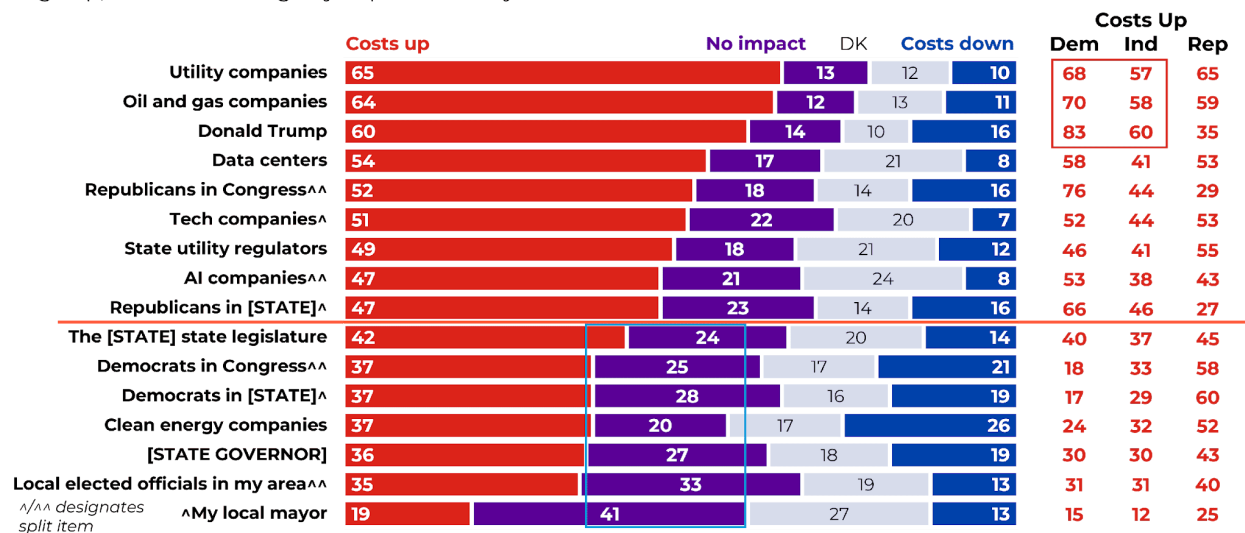
- **Views on AI and data centers are still dynamic and undefined:** One in five voters haven't heard anything about data centers and don't know where the nearest one is to their community. Trust is low across parties to handle data centers, AI, and utility costs generally – and voters are unsure whether solutions should come from federal, state, or local leaders.
- **Varying experiences with local data centers play a major role in shaping how voters interact with the topic:** those in rural counties where there have been contentious public debates around data centers are far more staunchly opposed to having one in their community than voters overall. Those in suburban and urban communities with contentious public debates around data centers; those in counties with upcoming data centers; and those in counties with existing data centers more closely resemble the general population.
- **What voters DO know is that their costs are rising, and they want action:** they trust state and local leaders more than the federal government on data centers and utilities than on other issues.
- **With much uncertainty in the landscape, voters are data center NIMBYs, but powering data centers with clean energy overcomes these concerns.** Powering data centers with clean energy creates an odd bedfellows effect, where typical progressive strongholds – Democratic women, liberal Democrats, college-educated women, and people of color – are pulled in by the prospect of clean energy, in partnership with those who always support data centers no matter the power source: men, especially younger men, and less conservative Republicans.
 - Voters in rural counties with contentious data centers remain less supportive of local data centers than voters overall, even when powered by clean energy (though a majority of them do support clean energy-powered data centers). Suburban/urban voters with contentious data centers, those with upcoming data centers, and those with existing data centers look more like the general population.
- **The strongest messaging in favor of clean energy-powered data centers focuses on bringing down costs, increasing electricity reliability, and building in a way that is responsible with wind and solar.** Voters are skeptical of the tech companies behind data centers and have real concerns that data centers will drive up local utility costs. Messaging that assuages these concerns is key to getting voters to support clean energy-powered data centers in their communities.

Key Findings

People feel their utility bills and gas prices are on the rise, and they blame the rising cost of oil and gas and the war with Iran most. Large majorities say that the cost of gas (88% cost going up) and utilities (80%) are rising, with many saying these costs are going up a lot – 65% and 40%, respectively. Among those who say their utility costs are rising, the increasing cost of gas and oil is blamed the most, with 45% ranking it among the top three causes of rising utility bills. Foreign conflicts, including the conflict between the U.S. and Iran, are also viewed as a leading cause of rising bills (37%).

Voters see utility and gas companies, data centers/tech/AI companies, and the Trump administration as driving up their utility costs the most. At the same time, they see their local mayor, local elected officials, and their state governor as far less responsible for driving up costs, but they also do not yet see them helping to bring them down, either.

Indicate for each one whether you think they are helping to bring utility costs down, are causing utility costs to go up, or are not having any impact on utility costs.



Voters don't trust either party on utility costs, data centers, or AI, but they see a bigger role for state and local government on data centers and utilities compared to other issues like the cost of gas, where fewer look to state and local government. Pluralities say they trust neither party or don't know which party to trust on the cost of utilities (37%), data centers (46%), and AI (49%), while remaining voters are split between the parties (net +3 trust Democrats more on utilities and AI each, net +2 on data centers). State and local government, meanwhile, are more trusted on data centers than on other issues (18% trust federal government most, 21% trust state government, 10% trust their local government), and the same goes for the cost of utilities (15% federal/34% state/13% local) – though many don't know who to trust. Compare that to the cost of gas, where 32% trust the federal government the most, 18% trust state government, and just 7% trust local government).

Overall, voters are not hearing much about data centers, but those in areas with contested centers are more tuned into the topic. Around 60% are hearing a lot or some about data centers being built or considered in the U.S., but only a third (35%) are hearing a lot or some about this activity in their community. Those in counties with contested data centers (canceled data centers, observed opposition, data centers stopped by local government, or local ordinances restricting data centers, as defined by [Heatmap](#) research) are hearing the most about this local activity – particularly those in rural areas with contested data centers (54% hearing a lot/some), but also those in urban/suburban areas with contested data centers (46%). Voters in counties with upcoming data centers (where data centers are planned, under construction, or land banked) are also hearing more, at 43% a lot/some, whereas those living near existing data centers are hearing just about as much as voters overall (38%).

Voters have mixed feelings about data centers, with local activity around data centers and age informing views. Nationwide, data centers are slightly above water, with 39% favorable, 35% unfavorable, and 26% not sure (net +4 favorable). But, it is clear that local activity around data centers plays a real role in shaping opinions: for example, rural voters in counties with contested data center activity are among the most hostile to data centers, with 34% favorable, 46% unfavorable, and 20% not sure (net -12 favorable). Seniors are also more negative toward data centers, at net -5 favorable. On the other hand, young men are some of the most bullish on data centers, at net +15 favorable.

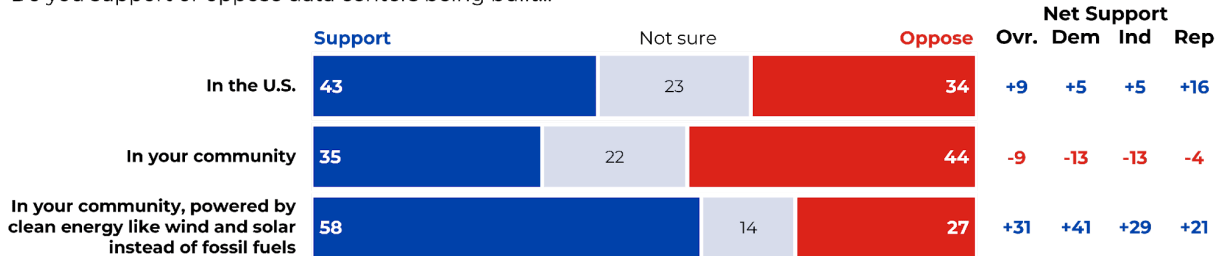
Voters narrowly support data centers nationwide but oppose them in their community. Support for data centers being built in the U.S. outpaces opposition by nine points, while many are still unsure (43% support/34% oppose/23% not sure). But when asked about data centers being built **in their community**, this result flips to a nine-point deficit (35% support/44% oppose/22% not sure) – an 18-point swing.

Job creation is the most convincing reason to support a local data center, while the impact on utility bills is the greatest concern, leaving many in favor of more regulation. Voters cite data centers creating local, good-paying jobs as the most convincing reason to support one, with 39% ranking it in the top three benefits. Meanwhile, data centers raising utility costs for consumers tops the list of concerns, with 38% ranking it in the top three. Other top concerns include the strain on local water supply (27%), data centers increasing electricity outages due to high demand (25%), and data centers getting cheaper electricity rates, subsidized by working families (24%). Balancing the potential benefits of local data centers with these concerns drives heightened support for regulation of data centers: 40% prefer more regulation generally, while 53% prefer more regulation on data centers specifically – a 13-point shift.

This creates an opportunity for state and local leaders – who many trust to look out for them on the issue – to lead the way on data centers. When it comes to who they trust to look out for them in building new data centers, voters are most trustful of clean energy companies (net +18 trust), local elected officials (net +11), their local mayor (net +9), and their governor (net +3). At the same time, voters do not trust oil and gas companies (net -31 trust), AI companies (net -27), tech companies (net -18), or utility companies (net -18).

Bringing clean energy into the data center debate changes the conversation entirely: while a local data center is opposed by 9 points, a local one powered by clean energy instead of fossil fuels is supported by 31 points.

Do you support or oppose data centers being built...



Voters want to see local data centers powered by wind and solar, NOT fossil fuels. When asked if they would support a data center being built in their community if it was powered by a variety of energy sources, new wind and solar instead of fossil fuels generates the greatest support (net +39 support), while new coal plants (net -21) and new diesel/natural gas generators next to data centers (net -18) are firmly underwater. Powering data centers with clean energy totally shifts views of how these facilities would impact their community’s environment (from 40% positive/no impact for data centers generally to 58% for those powered by clean energy), their utility bills (35% to 53%), and their cost of living (39% to 52%), showing how crucial clean energy is to shifting views of data centers in voters’ communities.

Powering data centers with clean energy creates a diverse and broad coalition. Men broadly (particularly those under 55) and non-conservative Republicans support local data centers regardless of energy source, as they’re fans of data centers across the board. This group is joined by a segment of voters who don’t support data centers generally but support them when they are powered by clean energy instead of fossil fuels: Democratic women, liberal Democrats, and college-educated voters.

Other data center policy solutions that are popular focus on protecting local communities – from higher costs, pollution, and more. After learning a bit more about the data center landscape, voters support policies that hold data centers responsible: 76% support requiring data centers to pay the full cost of the energy and grid infrastructure they say they need instead of passing costs to consumers, 73% support instituting stronger protections from air, water, and noise pollution from data centers, and 71% support requiring data centers to fund transmission and grid upgrades needed to support their operations in the communities they are considering.

There is also political opportunity to contrast this approach to data centers with where Trump and Republicans are seen on the issue. Across measures in this data, Trump and Republicans are seen as driving up utility costs (60% say Trump is driving up their utility bills, 52% say the same of Republicans in Congress) and are not trusted to look out for everyday people on issues related to data centers (net -21 trust Trump, net -18 trust Republicans in Congress). This creates ripe terrain for persuasion messaging about what Trump and Republicans are doing – or failing to do – on these issues. Messaging that highlights (1) Trump saying data centers won’t raise bills while bills are going up (58% say it is a 4 or 5 out of 5 on a concerning scale), (2) how Trump and Republicans have done nothing to increase accountability for utility companies (58%), and (3) Trump and Republicans’ sweetheart deals for tech companies including massive tax breaks for AI companies (57%) are among the most persuasive.

Key Messaging Findings

- **Clean energy is key to building support for data centers, especially among skeptics and environmentalists who otherwise oppose projects in their communities.** It improves their views of the impact of data centers on not just the local environment, but also on the impact of data centers on local utility bills and cost of living.
- **Voters are concerned data centers could raise already-high utility bills.** Acknowledging those fears and committing to responsible development that avoids higher costs – and even helps to bring utility costs down long term – is critical.
- **The most compelling message is that clean energy is cheaper, faster to build, and better for consumers, and that these data center projects are an opportunity to expand these technologies.** Wind and solar can meet demand while helping lower utility bills over time.
- **Voters want strong guardrails.** Emphasizing accountability, grid reliability, and local community benefits reassures people that data centers will be developed responsibly, not at their expense.

ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1,003 registered voters nationwide between April 9 and April 19, 2026. The survey has a confidence interval of +/-3.1%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. **An oversample of an additional 260 interviews were conducted online among rural voters in counties with contested data centers for a total of 272 interviews among this group, as well as oversamples of 90 suburban/urban voters in counties with contested data center activity (to reach 472 interviews), 70 urban voters in states with Democratic governors (to reach 447 interviews), 215 urban voters in states with Republican governors (to reach 327 interviews), 100 self-identified independent voters (to reach 338 interviews), 100 additional interviews each with Black, Hispanic, and AAPI voters (to reach 380, 286, and 145 interviews, respectively), to reach a total of 2,070 interviews overall.** Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of registered voters are properly represented. **Additionally, each oversample has been weighted to its appropriate proportion of registered voters overall.**